

REMARKS***Status of the Claims***

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the instant application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Upon entry of this Amendment, Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10, 11, and 13-26 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 3, 9, and 12 have been canceled. Claims 22-26 have been added. Applicants believe that these changes introduce no new matter. Entry and consideration of this Amendment are respectfully requested.

Claim for Foreign Priority

In the Office Action Summary, the Examiner indicates that only some of the certified priority documents have been received. Applicants respectfully disagree. This application claims the benefit of priority to only one foreign application (Japan 2000-217488). A certified copy of this application was submitted a on November 14, 2001. Applicants request that the Examiner indicate receipt of all certified priority documents in the next official communication.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1, 2, 6-8, 11, 14-16, and 19-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,802,469 to Nounin et al. Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

Independent claims 1, 8, 11, 14, and 19 have been amended to recite features of claims indicated by the Examiner as allowable. For example, claim 1 recites the features of allowable claim 3, claim 8 recites the features of allowable claim 9, and claim 11 recites the features of allowable claim 12. Amended claims 14 and 19 also recite features indicated by the Examiner as allowable. Accordingly, Applicants request allowance of these claims and their respective dependent claims.

New Claims

New claims 22-26 recite features recited in allowable claims 4, 5, 10, 13, and 5, respectively. Accordingly, Applicants request that these claims be allowed.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims and allowance of this application.

AUTHORIZATION

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4741.

In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4741.

Respectfully submitted,
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